

HELHEIM (Working Title)

Issue 1

Script for Pages 1 - 22

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Draft 1 - #/###/####

Before we get started...

Hey, Joelle!

Just a quick not to say that I'm looking forward to working with you on this! I can't wait to see what you do with it!

My scripts have been accused of looking like technical instructions, but please keep in mind that as far as I'm concerned, you should feel free to tweak things here or there if you think it'll make for a better book. You're a better visual storyteller than me, so I promise I won't be a diva if you change anything!

Hope you dig the script!

PAGE 1

1.1

We open on a shot of the muddy banks of a river at NIGHT. Seven shadowy FIGURES can be seen through the veil of darkness. We may not be able to count them here as they tend to blend together. They appear as little more than shades, but this is a group of fleeing warriors.

NO DIALOGUE.

1.2

Closer on the warriors as they continue running through the shadows. There are seven warriors in all. They are all covered in sweat and blood and numerous (mostly minor) injuries. They are dressed for battle. Most are in leather jerkins, carrying wooden shields (some cracked or broken), and swords or axes. Some of them wear cone-shaped helms. They splash through the mud and ankle-deep water. We may not see them all clearly in this panel, but I'll list them here for convenience (Not all of them are going to have names, though, because we're gonna kill them off shortly).

- RIKARD – This is our hero (yes, I changed his name from the pitch material). He is a handsome young man with thick, long blonde hair. He looks like a fairy tale prince in some ways. He is not wearing a helm, and his face is smudged with blood and dirt. He is physically strong, but he's not a giant by any means. He carries an axe and a dagger.
- KIRK – Rikard's father. He is in his forties, and the years have not been kind. He is a stout man, bearded, deeply wrinkled about the eyes. He is without a helm. He grasps a heavy axe and a shield (the top portion of which has been hacked off).
- SHAD – Rikard's best friend. He is a dark-haired young man, thin but wiry. He has a mean look to him. A cut runs across his forehead, and blood runs down his face. He is armed with a sword, but he holds it loosely in an arm that hangs limply at his side. Blood soaks his sleeve, and he clutches his shoulder with his free hand.
- WARRIOR 1 – A large man, more heavily armored than the others. He wears a helm. A couple of arrows are lodged in his arm and in his shield.
- WARRIOR 2 – He clutches a crumpled cloth to his throat. The cloth is soaked with blood. The man's beard is matted with blood as well. Through the slits in his helmet, we see that his eyes are wild.
- WARRIOR 3 – A frightened-looking man. He is thin. Although he still wears a helmet, the helm looks like it was almost cracked in two by a terrible blow. It's amazing the man survived. He looks back behind him with fear in his eyes.
- WARRIOR 4 – A rugged-looking man with gray hair pulled back from his face. He grimaces as he presses forward.

NO DIALOGUE.

(Cont'd.)

1.3

Warrior 2 slips and falls to his hands and knees in the dark water, splashing down and dropping his bloody cloth into the river. Rikard is already kneeling beside him, helping him to his feet. The other warriors continue on their way.

1/RIKARD: On your feet!

2/RIKARD: We can't stop to rest just yet.

1.4

On Warrior 2 and Rikard. Rikard pulls the man to his feet, an arm slung over his shoulder. Warrior 2 now clutches his hand to his throat, and blood sluices through his fingers.

3/WARRIOR 2: Leave me, Rikard. I'm finished.

4/WARRIOR 2: I'm going to die.

5/RIKARD: Yes.

6/RIKARD: But not on your knees.

1.5

Angle past the bloodied rag floating on the river's surface, the blood seeping out into the water. Rikard holds Warrior 2 in the background, and he is looking out past the rag at something we cannot see. Rikard's face is a mask of awe and fright.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGES 2 and 3

Double-page Spread. A large panel runs across the top with several smaller panels along the bottom.

2/3.1

Angle from behind Rikard and Warrior 2. Warrior 2 is looking down, but Rikard looks across the river's dark surface. The bloody rag floats toward a GHOSTLY FIGURE standing in the middle of what should be the deep part of the river. The figure is the ghost-like spitting image of Rikard. The specter stands tall and proud, but the expression on his face is somewhat sad. He holds a sword in both hands, as if offering it to someone. While it appears that all color has washed away from specter's form (leaving only a pale, softly glowing coloration), tears of blood (which are BRIGHT RED) roll down the creature's cheeks, down its body in long trails, and spills into the river below him. The red pool of blood spreads around the grim vision, and its color is bright on the water's surface.

NO DIALOGUE.

2/3.2

Close on Rikard's shocked face.

NO DIALOGUE.

2/3.3

Close on the ghostly image of Rikard. His face is expressionless. He might as well be a statue save for the tears of blood oozing down his face.

NO DIALOGUE.

2/3.4

On the warriors, Kirk in particular. They are sloshing ahead, but Kirk looks back, spittle flying from his lips as he calls to his son.

1/KIRK: Rikard!

2/KIRK: Keep moving, boy! They're right behind us!

2/3.5

On Rikard and Warrior 2. Rikard turns his head to his father, calling back to him. Warrior 2 is fading fast. He's slumping forward even though Rikard has hold of him.

3/RIKARD: But, father, I saw—

PAGE 4

4.1

Angle past Rikard as he looks out across the river's surface. The ghostly image has gone. The blood in the water has vanished. Only the bloodied cloth remains.

NO DIALOGUE.

4.2

Close on Rikard, puzzled and more rattled than before.

1/KIRK
(Off-panel): I don't care what you saw!

4.3

On Kirk, yelling. Behind him, the other warriors are so far along that they are vanishing into the shadow.

2/KIRK: If you don't keep moving, you'll be cut to ribbons like all the rest!

3/KIRK: And drop that **dead weight**! It's only slowing you down!

4.4

On Rikard and Warrior 2. Curiously, Rikard looks to the man he's helping. The man, however, is slumping down, his head lolling back (the cut on his throat ghastly). His mouth is agape and his eyes are rolled back to the whites. He's dead.

4/RIKARD: Dead weight?

5/RIKARD: But—

4.5

Rikard lets Warrior 2 slip down into the water.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 5

5.1

Rikard grimly forges ahead, leaving the body of Warrior 2 behind him.

NO DIALOGUE.

5.2

On the warriors, pressing forward as Rikard joins them. None of them look back, except for Kirk, who glances back to make sure his son is with them.

NO DIALOGUE.

5.3

On the face of Warrior 2, floating in the river, but beginning to sink. His blood clouds the dark water.

NO DIALOGUE.

5.4

As previous, but Warrior 2 has sunk beneath the surface.

NO DIALOGUE.

5.5

A BOOT splashes down into the water near the dead body. Another warrior wearing a mish-mash of leather and fur moves past.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 6

6.1

This is a shot of the SAVAGES who are pursuing the rag-tag group. This is a fierce group, dressed in furs and leather. They are bearded wildmen, and the fingers of their fallen enemies have been braided into their beards. Some of them may wear necklaces of ears. Their weapons are strangely hooked and serrated and curved. Some of them might be armed with bows, and they have arrows at the ready. A few of them carry guttering torches. They are covered in dried blood and dirt and spit. There are a dozen of them, snarling and slaving as they rush through the mud and water. The LEADER is a few steps ahead of the rest, and he holds several disfigured DOGS on barbed chains. The dogs look like mastiffs that have been skinned and wrapped in something like barbed-wire. The dogs bark ferociously and pull against their chains.

NO DIALOGUE.

6.2

Close on the hideous dogs, barking and spitting.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 7

7.1

CUT to an establishing shot of a FORTIFIED VILLAGE. We angle past the shadowy forms of Rikard and the others as they approach. The forest pools back, leaving a field of hastily chopped tree stumps leading up to a wall of timber. The logs comprising the wall lean and canter in the mud as if erected quickly, but they are sturdy and cut to a point. Torches burn at the sides of a sealed gate (it, too, is a ramshackle thing, not on hinges but heavy and requiring several men to move). In addition, there are HUMAN HEADS (the heads of dead wildmen) on pikes along the muddy trail leading to the village gate.

1/WARRIOR 3
(Yelling): Open the gate!

2/WARRIOR 3
(Yelling): They're right behind us!

3/WARRIOR 3
(Yelling): Open up, damn it!

7.2

Close on Warrior 3 as he turns to look into the darkness behind him. Kirk stands next to him. He places a hand on the warrior's shoulder, trying to calm him, but he still looks terrified.

4/WARRIOR 3
(Small): Open up.

5/KIRK: They **can't** open the gate **because** we're being followed.

6/KIRK: If we'd been a few steps faster... if we had a little more **distance** between us.

7.3

On Kirk, spitting out the words with grim resolve.

7/KIRK: But if they open the gates now, those **beasts** would get inside.

8/KIRK: They'd **slaughter** many before they were brought down.

(Cont'd.)

7.4

Rikard whirls around to face whatever it is that's coming up behind them. He has his axe in one hand, his dagger in the other. He's a badass and it shows. The others are behind him. It looks almost as if Rikard is standing guard before everyone. Nearby is one of the heads on a stick. It seems to be looking in the same direction as Rikard.

9/RIKARD: We tried **running**.

10/RIKARD: It didn't work.

7.5

The Savages emerge from the darkness. They are stalking up slowly, menacingly. The dogs on their chains are snarling and slobbering and pulling forward, ready to kill.

11/RIKARD
(Off-panel): Now...either way... we **fight**!

PAGE 8

8.1

Close on the leader of the wildmen, sneering. He knows these men cannot stand against him and his forces.

NO DIALOGUE.

8.2

On Rikard, with a deft movement, he slashes his axe out and cuts the pike that holds the dead man's head. The head topples through the air.

NO DIALOGUE.

8.3

Close on the Wildman leader, his eyes narrow, his sneer fading.

NO DIALOGUE.

8.4

Still staring toward his enemies, Rikard places a foot on the dead man's severed head.

NO DIALOGUE.

8.5

Close on the dead man's head beneath Rikard's boot. As Rikard applies pressure, the eyes bulge, the tongue lolls from the mouth. The rotted flesh is giving way, the teeth being pushed out from festering gums.

NO DIALOGUE.

8.6

On the savages. The leader is screaming now, and he's released the dogs. The beasts throw themselves toward their prey. The other savages ready for the fight to come.

1/LEADER
(Scream): Raaaawwwwwwwrrrrrrr!

PAGE 9

9.1

On Rikard as the dogs attack. Some of the beasts dart around him, scurrying in the dirt as they try to flank him. They are hunched, snapping, annoying things. Another dog leaps into the air, but Rikard is swatting it down with his axe, the blade buried in the animal's side. Arrows fly through the air, zipping past.

NO DIALOGUE.

9.2

On Kirk, Shad, and Warrior 3. Kirk raises his broken shield, and a couple of arrows thump into it. Shad's wounded arm is limp at his side, but he has his bloodied sword in his other hand. He looks ready to fight. Warrior 3 looks terrified.

1/WARRIOR 3
(Small):

T-They take the bodies...

2/WARRIOR 3
(Small):

We never find the bodies... What do they do with them?

3/WARRIOR 3
(Small):

I... I can't let them take me...

4/SHAD:

Stop your mewling and start fighting...

9.3

Let's give them a shot of the good guys charging the bad guys here. Rikard is in the front of his friends, and he is surrounded by the bloody carnage of several dead hounds. The other warriors are charging, weapons and shields drawn. The wildmen are charging, too, and a couple of them are launching arrows at our heroes.

5/SHAD:

...or I'll give you to them myself!

PAGE 10

10.1

On Rikard. He is charging forward, and he's hurling his dagger right at the "camera." With his other hand, he swings his axe down and back (almost like a haphazard golf club swing).

NO DIALOGUE.

10.2

On the savage leader and one of his warriors. Rikard's dagger thumps into the soldier's forehead, embedding itself in the man's skull. His head snaps back and he wears a look of shock. The leader glances toward the man.

NO DIALOGUE.

10.3

Rikard strikes, now holding the handle of his axe with both hands. While the leader is distracted, Rikard hits him in the chin with a brutal uppercut style swing. The leader's head snaps back and blood sprays into the air. Rikard has split the man from chest to forehead.

NO DIALOGUE.

10.4

The leader flops to the side. Rikard stands before him, looking every bit like some shadowy spirit of death.

1/RIKARD
(Small): Come on then.

10.5

The warriors and savages charge each other. They are all screaming their battle cries as their weapons cut into one another. Rikard's group consists of more skilled warriors, and even in this panel we can see that they are dealing terrible wounds to their foes.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 11

11.1

Warrior 4 cuts down one of the wildmen.

NO DIALOGUE.

11.2

Several savages leap onto Warrior 3, bringing him down and stabbing him with their swords as he screams.

1/WARRIOR 3: N-No!

2/WARRIOR 3
(Scream): Nnnoooooooo—

11.3

Warrior 1 and Shad fight together, slashing and cutting at a tide of wildmen that come at them.

3/SHAD
(Small): Poor bastard.

4/WARRIOR 1: Better 'im than me.

11.4

Kirk and Rikard fight back to back. Kirk slashes at the wildmen with his axe. He whirls the weapon above his head that it almost looks like he's going to take off.

NO DIALOGUE.

11.5

Angling past them, we see the last of the savages retreating.

5/KIRK: That's done it. They're routed.

PAGE 12

12.1

Kirk and Warrior 4 look out at the bodies of the savages and their dogs. The crumpled forms lie in the mud, blood soaking into the ground around them. Standing amidst the bodies like some sort of grim reaper is Rikard. His shoulders sag and the head of his axe drags the ground. Both Kirk and Warrior 4 look weary from the battle.

1/RIKARD: Good.

2/RIKARD: Let the **night creatures** feed on **their** corpses for a change.

12.2

Angle past the remaining warriors as they move toward the gates of the settlement. The gates are being slid open from within, and the light of numerous torches can be seen beyond the gate.

Text

12.3

The warriors walk through the gates. Rikard and Kirk walk together. They are both covered in the blood of their enemies, Rikard maybe more so than his father. Kirk smirks as he glances over at his son. The other warriors follow. We see some of the villagers—older men and some women dressed in the dirty garb of peasants and farmers—who have just pulled the gates open. They are looking out toward the battlefield.

#/KIRK: I suppose we'll have to call you hound-killer now.

#/RIKARD: If we were smart, we'd all call each other "dog-**eater**" and we'd drag those curs inside and put them on a spit.

#/RIKARD: These people are **hungry**.

12.4

On Kirk, smiling in spite of his worry.

#/KIRK: I'd have to be quite a bit hungrier before I'd eat one of those beasts.

#/KIRK: Don't get me wrong, I've eaten dog before, but those creatures...

#/KIRK: They're **tainted**.

12.5

Shad walks up between Rikard and his father. While Kirk is listening, Rikard is looking away at the sound of a voice.

#/SHAD: As soon as I've slapped a poultice on this wound, I'll take a few men and go hunting.

#/SHAD: The wildmen couldn't have chased all the game aw—

#/VOICE: Rikard!

PAGE 13

13.1

Angle past Rikard as he turns toward BERA. She is a beautiful young woman, maybe eighteen, wearing the garb of a simple peasant. Still, she somehow manages to make the clothes look sexy. She's a witch—and an evil one—but here we want her to look beautiful, fresh, and innocent (although we know she's not). She looks concerned, her brow furrowed a little. She carries a basket of healing supplies—herbs and rags and clay bottles.

1/RIKARD: Bera!

2/BERA: I was worried.

13.2

Bera embraces Rikard. She places her head upon his massive chest. He is catching himself, worried that she'll get dirty.

3/RIKARD: Don't.

4/RIKARD: I have blood on me.

5/BERA: I'm not afraid of a little blood.

13.3

Angle past Bera and Rikard. Now Rikard is fully embracing Bera. We see Kirk glaring at them from the background.

6/BERA: I was worried that you wouldn't return.

7/RIKARD: Many of our number did not.

13.4

Close on Bera, still holding onto Rikard. Blood is smeared across her face where she touched him. Her cheek is now against his chest, and she is looking up as he talks. It is a look that speaks volumes in terms of her ulterior motivation.

8/RIKARD: We failed. The witch is too heavily protected by her savages... and **other** things.

9/RIKARD: **Groa** yet lives.

(Cont'd.)

13.5

Bera pulls back. She still holds Rikard, but she is now looking in his eyes. Bera looks creepy with her beautiful but bloody face.

10/BERA: It's all right.

13.6

On Kirk and Shad. Shad is pulling the older man's shoulder. Kirk wears an expression of rage as he stares toward Bera.

11/BERA
(Off-panel): You can try again.

12/KIRK
(Small): Hrrr

13/SHAD: C'mon , old man....

PAGE 14

14.1

In the foreground, Shad has his good arm around Kirk's shoulder as he ushers him away. In the background, Bera and Rikard stand in each other's arms. The peasants are starting to push the gate closed.

- 1/SHAD: Let's find our **own** women and stop worrying over your son's.
- 2/KIRK: Don't be stupid, Shad.
- 3/KIRK: **You're** the next closest thing to a beddable woman in this camp... and I don't think **either** of us is quite ready for that.

14.2

On the peasants as they push the gate closed. One of the women is looking out toward the battlefield, and she's gasping in horror. The others look toward her in surprise.

- 2/WOMAN
(Small): L-look.
- 3/WOMAN: Look!

14.3

Over the shoulder of the peasants as they look toward the battlefield. A strange MIST rises from the bodies littering the field.

- 4/PEASANT: Something's **happening**!

14.4

On the bodies as the mist curls off of them.

NO DIALOGUE.

14.5

Suddenly, a SKELETAL ARM seems to rip itself out of one of the corpses, as if the bones were trying to free themselves from the flesh. Viking RUNES appear on the bones. The mist roils around the arm.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 15

15.1

Now, full skeletons are pulling themselves out of corpses of the men. The skeletons are covered in strange runes. The skeletons drip gore and bits of clothing and flesh. The mist is roiling around them. Some of the skeletons stand fully erect, while others are still pushing themselves up.

NO DIALOGUE.

15.2

Close on a couple of the skeletons as the black mist seems to wash over them.

NO DIALOGUE.

15.3

As previous, but where the mist passes, black armor appears on the skeletons, black weapons—axes and swords—appear in their hands. It is as if the mist is *congealing* into this strange armor.

NO DIALOGUE.

15.4

On Bera and Rikard. Rikard looks toward the gate as he begins to push Bera away.

1/PEASANT
(Off-panel,
Scream): Night creatures!

2/RIKARD: A trap.

3/RIKARD
(Yelling): It's a **trap**!

PAGE 16

16.1

Now armed with black weapons and covered in black armor, the skeletons storm through the gates. They hack at helpless peasants, cutting them down as they scream. The skeletons all seem to be yelling, but they have no voices. As they charge through the gates, they hack at Warrior 1, killing him.

1/PEASANT 1: Close the gate before it's—

2/PEASANT 1
(Scream): Aaaiiiiieeee!

3/PEASANT 2
(Scream): Rreaargh!

16.2

The skeletons race through the settlement, chopping down Warrior 4, spattering his blood. Peasants are pushing and screaming, trying to get away.

4/WARRIOR 1: Hrrk!

16.3

Rikard moves toward the battle. He hefts his axe. Bera staggers back, away from him.

5/RIKARD: Go, Bera!

6/RIKARD: Hide!

16.4

Rikard wades into battle with the skeletons. He swings his axe at neck level, hacking the heads off of two of the skeletal warriors. A couple of others duck low, coming at him with their swords. While there is no blood, each killing stroke trails BLACK VAPORS.

7/RIKARD
(Scream): Hhrraaaaaaa!

PAGE 17

17.1

Shad and Kirk are running back toward the fight. Shad drives his sword through eye socket of one of the skeletons. Kirk is looking around—trying to find someone.

1/SHAD: Dammit!

2/SHAD: How many times do we have to kill these bastards?

3/KIRK
(Small): Bera.

17.2

A skeleton steps on the back of an old woman who has fallen. The monster raises its axe high, preparing to chop her up. As the skeletons attack helpless peasants, a torch falls over, setting hay on fire.

4/PEASANT
(Scream): Neeeeaaaaaggggh!

17.3

Rikard hacks another of the skeletons down. All around him, the village is starting to BURN.

NO DIALOGUE.

17.4

On Bera, her eyes wide as firelight plays across her bloody face. A shadowy figure (Kirk) rises behind her. She doesn't notice.

NO DIALOGUE.

(Cont'd.)

17.5

Shad is weak—sweating, exhausted, his sword dragging the ground—as a skeleton rises up before him, ready to cleave his head from his shoulders.

5/SHAD

(Small, weak): S’hardly fair.

6/SHAD

(Small, weak): What makes... makes you so special... that you get to come back just to... kill me?

17.6

Extreme close on the skeleton’s mouth. It looks like it is smiling.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 18

18.1

Rikard slams his shoulder into the skeleton, knocking it aside before it can strike Shad dead.

1/RIKARD
(Yelling): Hrrraaa!

18.2

On Shad, passing out into the mud.

2/SHAD
(Small, weak): See there?

3/SHAD
(Small, weak,
Trailing off): Not so special after all.

18.3

Close on Rikard as he slashes another skeleton into dust. His face is wild and mad. He is sweating and dirty.

NO DIALOGUE.

18.4

Closer on Rikard, turning as he hears a scream.

4/RIKARD: Hhh—

5/BERA
(Off-panel.
Scream): No!

(Cont'd.)

18.5

Angle past Rikard. We see that Kirk holds Bera by the arm. He's dragging her along as if offering her up. He has his axe in his other hand. Bera is screaming, trying to pull free.

6/RIKARD: Father! What are you—

7/KIRK
(Yelling): Here! Here she is!

8/KIRK
(Yelling): **She's** the one you want! Take her and leave the rest
 of us be!

18.6

Close on a trio of skeletons, watching silently, curiously, as if considering the offer.

9/KIRK
(Off-panel,
Yelling): Take her!

PAGE 19

19.1

On Bera and Kirk. Bera has pulled away and she stumbles forward, tripping, almost on her hands and knees. Kirk is behind her, his axe held high.

1/KIRK
(Yelling): I'll kill her myself if I have to!

19.2

Bera rolls to her back as Kirk brings his axe down. She throws her hands up over her face. But Rikard's own axe intercepts his father's blade. Kirk and Rikard growl at each other. They strain as their axes push against one another.

2/RIKARD
(Yelling): No!

3/RIKARD: No, father!

4/KIRK: They're after **her**, boy!

5/KIRK: They're after her and they won't stop attacking until she's—

19.3

One of the skeletons rises up behind Rikard, slashing him viciously with a sword. Rikard screams out, his every muscle tense.

6/KIRK
(Yelling): Rikard! Look out!

7/RIKARD
(Scream): Nnyyeaggh!

19.4

As Bera scrambles across the ground to get away, Rikard goes to his knees, in shock over the pain. Kirk hacks the skeleton that attacked his son in half.

NO DIALOGUE.

(Cont'd.)

19.5

On Rikard, still on his knees as a dark skeleton rises behind him. The monster draws its axe back for a killing stroke.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 20

20.1

In a terribly BLOODY panel, the skeleton's axe CHOPS into Rikard's neck, tearing the young warrior's head from his body. Rikard's expression is one of shock.

NO DIALOGUE.

20.2

Kirk screams as he pulverizes another skeleton's skull with his axe.

1/KIRK
(Scream): No!

20.3

Close on Bera, her eyes wide as she stares. Tears spill down her cheek, leaving trails in the blood.

2/BERA
(Small): Rikard—

PAGE 21

21.1

Kirk is on his knees now, his axe in the mud beside him. His head is down, his palms up. Bera stands nearby, watching. She wrings her hands together. Shad stumbles toward them. He still drags his sword along. Smoke rolls behind them. Ash flutters through the air. The battle is over, but the toll has been high.

NO DIALOGUE.

21.2

On Rikard's head. The eyes open and staring, the mouth agape.

NO DIALOGUE.

21.3

Angle past the head. We see the ruins of the village. Bodies of peasants litter the ground. Buildings are aflame. A few survivors mill around aimlessly. Standing in the middle of all the destruction is the ghostly figure of Rikard that we saw on PAGES 2/3. As before, it appears expressionless and passive. Tears of blood spill down the face and run in rivulets down the body.

NO DIALOGUE.

21.4

Let's close this scene on a parting shot of the settlement, flames crawling across the timber, lighting the night.

NO DIALOGUE.

PAGE 22

22.1

Similar to 21.5, but it is now DAY. The settlement is no longer burning, but much of the timber is blackened and crumbling. Pillars of smoke rise from within the settlement.

NO DIALOGUE.

22.2

In the settlement, the survivors move slowly and sadly, cleaning up, repairing damage to buildings.

1/SHAD
(Off-panel): Rikard was the **best** of us.

22.3

Kirk and Shad sit on the ground, their backs propped against the wall of a house. They are worn out, weak. Shad's hair hangs before his eyes, and his arm is finally bound. Kirk's eyes have a faraway cast to them. They pass a horn of mead back and forth.

2/SHAD: I wish you and your son were drinking to **my** memory rather than the two of us drinking to his.

3/KIRK: It was his fate to fall.

4/KIRK: It was his time to die and journey on to his final reward.

22.4

Kirk tips the horn back, the liquid spilling down his whiskers. Shad looks at the older man.

5/SHAD: The corpses from last night... they stayed where they fell...

6/SHAD: It's the first time the ghouls let the dead rest in weeks.

7/SHAD: Perhaps the demons in the dark are done tormenting us?

8/KIRK: What of my son's body?

(Cont'd.)

22.5

Closer on Kirk and Shad. The older man pulls the drinking horn from his lips. Shad looks at him curiously, unsure how the man will react.

9/SHAD: He's being tended.

22.6

Close up of Kirk, his face contorting in rage.

10/SHAD
(Off-panel): **Bera** took him.

PAGE 23

23.1

Weary, Kirk shuffles through the settlement. He might be simply exhausted. He is not armed.

NO DIALOGUE.

23.2

Kirk moves toward the door of one of the buildings. The door is open, but it is dark within. Flies buzz around the doorway.

1/KIRK: Bera!

2/KIRK: Where are you!

23.3

Reversing the angle as Kirk steps through the door. He is backlit.

3/KIRK: It should have been **you** who died!

4/KIRK: My son might have been blinded by you... but not me.

5/KIRK: Someone has to pay.

6/KIRK: **You** must make recompense for my son's death!

23.4

Kirk enters the darkened room. He holds the back of his hand to his nose to stifle the stench. All around him, shadowy forms hang from the ceiling. We don't have to spell it out very clearly here, just enough to give the reader a hint, but these are BODY PARTS hanging from chains like sides of beef around the room. Kirk looks around in shock and horror.

7/KIRK
(Small): W-what...

8/KIRK: What is this?

9/KIRK: It wasn't demons who have been stealing the dead! It was—

(Cont'd.)

23.5

A massive hand grabs Kirk by the throat. Kirk's eyes go wide as he can suddenly no longer breathe.

10/KIRK: Hkkk!

11/BERA
(Off-panel): I've only done what I must to protect myself.

12/BERA
(Off-panel): And you shouldn't fret. Your son's **not** dead.

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24.1

BIG PANEL. We see Kirk being lifted off his feet by a newly reborn Rikard.

While we recognize his face, his head has been stitched onto a massive body. We're talking Conan massive. The body has been stitched together from several corpses, like Frankenstein's monster, and we see the thick leather stitches here and there over the figure. The stitches are most noticeable around Rikard's neck. His face looks pain-filled and tormented. His hair hangs down before his eyes.

Bera stands next to him, smiling up at Kirk.

Kirk grabs at the monstrosities arms, but he cannot free himself. He kicks and squirms.

NOW we should see that the chamber is decorated with slabs of flesh and bodies that Bera has collected from battles. Some of the pieces of dead meat are fresher than others.

1/BERA: I wouldn't trade a dozen berserkers for one of Rikard.

2/BERA: He was strong and fast and sweet and oh-so loyal.

3/BERA: I would **never** just let him die.

24.2

Close on Kirk, the life being choked out of him. Spittle flies from his lips.

4/KIRK: Ggggkk

5/BERA
(Off-panel): You said it yourself, Kirk. My **enemies** are still coming for me.

24.3

Close on Rikard's agony-filled face.

6/BERA
(Off-panel): Your son can't rest until they're all my rivals are dead!